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# Custom tailored crises!

**T**here is little doubt about the validity of the following three propositions:

1. **An unspoken agreement exists between the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid eyeball-to-eyeball challenges which could lead to nuclear war.**

The United States and Western Europe have in the past gone to extraordinary lengths to signal to the U.S.S.R. that they would do nothing to exploit Soviet troubles within its East European empire. Thus the West did nothing during the 1953 East German uprising; the 1956 Polish and Hungarian uprisings; Czechoslovakia, 1968, and, beyond temporary semi-punitive repetitions, little against Poland in 1981. The U.S.S.R. has shunned repetitions of dangerous coups like Stalin's Berlin blockade in 1948 and Khrushchev's 1962 missile confrontation.

2. **The Soviet drive for ideological and military world domination is unquenchable.**

Every Radio Moscow broadcast, every speech by politburo members, every Soviet newspaper and magazine article heralds the inevitability of the triumph of a Kremlin-managed world and the need to hasten the day. Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power has changed nothing in this Soviet offensive for world domination.

3. **Absent military power and President Reagan's evident determination to use that power, (Congresso volente) the world future would belong to the Kremlin.**

Faced with 3½ more years of President Reagan, the Soviet Union has evolved a new form of quasi-warfare. Its expression minimizes the risk of superpower confrontations, yet weakens American resolve and, therefore, diminishes the credibility of American military power. I call this Soviet strategy "the non-

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crisis crisis." By that I mean the creation of micro-crises in different parts of the world, which — while threatening the stability, existence, and alignment of Western allies — are events for which the U.S.S.R. cannot be held directly accountable, as it was for the destruction of the Korean airliner in September 1983.

In other words, the "non-crisis crisis" allows the Soviet Union to occupy the high ground of statesmanship while restless and politically ambitious junior partners or surrogates can operate on the low ground of terrorism, hit-and-run border raids, and even take on the United States in air battles over the Gulf of Sidra. How can it hurt the U.S.S.R. if 6th Fleet Tomcats shoot down a couple of Libyan jets in international waters and nothing else happens to affect Col. Muammar Qaddafi's incumbency?

The current example of a "non-crisis crisis" at work is Central America, where the United States is bogged down in El Salvador and Nicaragua. American public opinion is more or less divided, congressional debate is bitter and irresolute, and NATO allies are at odds with the United States. No U.S.-Soviet confrontation, yet gains for the U.S.S.R. The confrontation seems to be with somebody named Ortega, not Mikhail Gorbachev.

The scene of another "non-crisis crisis" is the Persian Gulf. President Carter six years ago thought it necessary to warn the U.S.S.R. that any move by Soviet military power to close the Gulf to the West would be met by U.S. counterforce. So what do we see? The Persian Gulf is closed by the Iran-Iraq war and the Soviets can't be blamed for that catastrophe, and so no U.S. counterforce need apply.

The "non-crisis crisis" has become an institutionalized part of contemporary international relations, as normal as a dynamite-crammed Mercedes in the streets of Beirut.

Five countries have been tagged as responsible for the spread of the "non-crisis crisis" syndrome, according to Dr. Avigor Haselkorn, senior analyst at Analytical Assessments, a division of the Eaton Corp., Cleveland. They compose what can be described collectively as the Radical Entente — Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Libya, and Syria, all of them openly dedicated to the overthrow of American power and American allies in Central America, the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific Rim.

With the exception of Cuba, these countries cannot be called Soviet

satellites comparable to the unwinding Warsaw Pact members of Eastern Europe. Yet none of their external actions and policies injure Soviet interests; in fact, they further those interests. How can it hurt the U.S.S.R. if Syria takes over effective control of Lebanon?

It could even be that the U.S.S.R. has no "need to know" in advance what the Radical Entente is up to. After all, why should then Politburo member Gorbachev have to have known about a probably Libyan-inspired IRA plot to destroy the British Cabinet at a Brighton seaside hotel when he was scheduled to visit Prime Minister Thatcher in a few months' time? Better he shouldn't know and thereby enjoy the benefits of "plausible deniability," so that when Prime Minister Thatcher met Mr. Gorbachev she could later describe him as a man she can do business with.

All Moscow needs is the wink which tells all. Thus in 1980, Soviet and East German diplomats managed to slip away from a Dominican Republic Embassy party in Bogota half an hour before a band of Colombian guerrillas marched in and kept the remaining non-Communist diplomats hostage for several days.

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The most urgent question before President Reagan is this:

How can American state-of-the-art crisis management deal with the "non-crisis crisis" phenomenon which is intended to stretch thin U.S. military and intelligence resources?

The answer is that at present, the United States cannot deal with micro-crises such as the slaughter of U.S. marines in Lebanon last year or the threat to U.S. personnel in the U.N. Lebanon forces. The United States can now do little more except withdraw from such terrorized areas, with all the awful consequences of such withdrawals.

True, the Grenada invasion and liberation was an excellent example of micro-crisis management, but that was a fluke. The lessons taught by the Grenada triumph have been smothered by House Speaker Tip O'Neil, the left-liberal media, and, not surprisingly, so-called liberal Republicans, who on foreign policy questions follow the appeasement, defeatist ideology of Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn.

What is needed is convocation at the earliest possible moment of a meeting of minds among professional soldiers, academicians who

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have studied crisis management, and a new breed of intelligence officers who will think micro, not macro. We need a school of "non-crisis crisis" managers, interdepartmental and interservice in nature, endowed with the power to deploy military, quasi-military, and non-military assets pre-emptively, a power designed to counter the made-in-Moscow "death of a thousand cuts" strategy.

However effective supercomputers and spy satellites may be against the Soviet bloc, they will most assuredly not overcome the ingenious scenario of the "non-crisis crisis" which the Radical Entente has prepared for us and which is working so well for them.

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